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Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies

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Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report describes the efforts made since the previous report of 28 September 2009 (A/64/372) by Member States, regional and intergovernmental organizations and the United Nations to strengthen programmes devoted to the promotion and consolidation of democracy, including through increased bilateral, regional and international cooperation, taking into account innovative approaches and best practices. The report also provides an account of how Member States, together with the United Nations and other organizations, marked the International Day of Democracy, which was celebrated for the first time on 15 September 2008. The report then reviews the assistance provided by the United Nations system to new or restored democracies and the role of regional, intergovernmental and other organizations in the promotion and consolidation of democracy, including the cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and its international partners. Lastly, it makes recommendations for further action.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 64/12, the General Assembly encouraged Governments to strengthen national programmes devoted to the promotion and consolidation of democracy, including through increased bilateral, regional and international cooperation, taking into account innovative approaches and best practices. The Assembly invited all Member States, organizations of the United Nations system, regional and intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and individuals to continue to commemorate the International Day of Democracy in an appropriate manner that would contribute to raising awareness, and requested the Secretary-General to continue to take necessary measures, within existing resources, for the observance by the United Nations of the International Day of Democracy.

2. In the same resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to it at its sixty-sixth session on the implementation of the resolution. The present report is submitted in compliance with that request and covers the period since the previous report of 28 September 2009 (A/64/372).

II. International Day of Democracy

3. A notable achievement of the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, under the chairmanship of Qatar, was the establishment by the General Assembly of the International Day of Democracy on 15 September, as noted in Assembly resolutions 62/7 and 64/12 and celebrated for the first time in 2008.

A. Activities of Member States

4. To commemorate the third International Day of Democracy in 2010, the current Chair of the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, organized a panel discussion on "Democracy and the Millennium Development Goals" on 15 September 2010. The event was addressed by the then-President of the General Assembly, Joseph Deiss; the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations, Jorge Valero; the Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, Rebeca Grynspan; the President of the Committee for the Cancellation of Third World Debt, Eric Toussaint; the Director of the Latin American School of Government, Public Policy and Citizenship at the Complutense University of Madrid, Juan Carlos Monedero; the Permanent Observer of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Anda Filip; the Permanent Observer of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Massimo Tommasoli; and the Secretary-General.

5. The panellists recognized that democracy was essential to achieving strong, healthy and just societies and that it was an indispensable means for achieving development for all humankind. They recalled General Assembly resolution 64/12 and affirmed that a diverse and inclusive policy process, inherent in every democratic society, allowed citizens to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems. While democracies shared common features, there was no single model of democracy, and democracy did not belong to any country or region.

6. According to information provided by IPU and Member States, the third International Day of Democracy was also observed by 36 national parliaments. Under the theme "Political accountability: strengthening links between parliaments and citizens", activities included conferences, debates and workshops on all continents and brought together parliamentarians, civil society and media representatives. For example, in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, a special web page was launched to inform citizens about the day and encourage them to get involved with parliaments; in Tunisia and Zambia, the day was marked by the celebration of the opening sessions of national youth parliaments; and in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, an e-Democracy conference was held on the theme "Information and communications technology: a driver for improving democracy".

7. Many of the parliaments made use of information material provided to them by IPU, which included a poster and a leaflet entitled "Your parliament: working for you, accountable to you".

8. The responses of Member States, particularly parliaments, to the invitation to celebrate the International Day of Democracy have been consistently impressive since 2008. The challenge remains to encourage additional Member States to observe the International Day of Democracy and to consider it an opportunity to increase awareness of the importance for citizens of valuing democracy and fully participating in the ongoing task of achieving and consolidating open, transparent, inclusive and sustainable democratic societies.

B. Activities of the United Nations Secretariat

9. To mark the International Day of Democracy in 2010 and to make the link between democracy and achieving the Millennium Development Goals explicit, the Secretary-General issued a statement underlining the pivotal role that democracy played in reducing poverty and promoting human well-being, noting that transparency, accountability and responsive governance were essential if efforts for development were to succeed. The Secretary-General also affirmed the commitment of the United Nations to help in safeguarding and advancing democracy, human rights and the rule of law and to live up to those commitments.

10. Activities to commemorate the International Day of Democracy were carried out by United Nations bodies listed below.

11. The Department of Public Information covered United Nations messages and events held around the world to mark the day and worked with the United Nations Democracy Fund, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM; now part of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Department of Political Affairs to launch a web portal on democracy in the six official languages of the Organization. The web portal also contains the Secretary-General's Guidance Note on Democracy, which was issued in 2009.

12. The network of United Nations information centres actively promoted the day and undertook a wide range of activities, particularly in Ankara, Asunción, Beirut,

Bogotá, Colombo, Lima, Manama, Ouagadougou, Tehran, Warsaw, Yaoundé and Yerevan and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

13. To mark the third International Day of Democracy, the United Nations Democracy Fund organized a round table on democracy, inviting all donors to the Fund (39 nations, including many middle- and low-income countries from Africa, Asia and Latin America) to comment on the impact of democracy in their respective countries. The Fund also encouraged civil society organizations to celebrate the day by initiating their own activities and featured them on the Fund's website.

14. On 15 September 2011, the UNDP regional centre in Johannesburg, South Africa, and the country office in Kenya worked with a consortium of government agencies, civil society organizations and United Nations agencies for an intergenerational high-level dialogue in Nairobi. Youth leaders and eminent persons from eight countries from around the world discussed youth inclusion in development, governance and social transition, with particular emphasis on implications for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

C. Activities of other organizations

15. IPU used the day in 2010 as an opportunity to be present in a variety of media, including with an article by its President, Theo-Ben Gurirab, and interviews with its Secretary General, Anders B. Johnsson. In October 2010, IPU co-organized the World e-Parliament Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa.

16. To mark the International Day of Democracy in 2011, IPU launched its first social media campaign to reach out to a wider community, encouraging its audience to celebrate the day under the theme "What citizens expect from their parliament", which ties in with the 2012 joint IPU-UNDP Global Parliamentary Report.

17. In 2011, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance co-organized with the Government of Mexico an international conference in Mexico City.

III. Assistance provided by the United Nations system to new or restored democracies

18. At the World Summit in 2005 and in General Assembly resolution 64/12, Member States recommitted themselves to protecting and promoting human rights, the rule of law and democracy, recognizing that they were interlinked and mutually reinforcing and that they belonged to the universal and indivisible core values and principles of the United Nations. Democratic principles are woven throughout the normative fabric of the Organization and have been continually strengthened by the progressive adoption of international human rights norms and standards and resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. For instance, by laying out the key norms and setting institutional parameters and goals, the Secretary-General's Guidance Note on Democracy of 2009 has proved to be a useful document for harmonizing the work of the Organization in support of democratic development.

19. The evolution of United Nations norms and standards has been matched by an ever greater operational activity on the ground by United Nations entities, as demand for the Organization's assistance with democracy-related issues such as institution-building, elections, the rule of law and strengthening civil society continues to grow. Nevertheless, the challenges to consolidating democracy around the globe remain numerous: restoring or building new democracies and preserving fragile ones, as well as improving the quality of the world's democratic institutions and practices. This latter challenge is one from which no Member State is exempt.

20. With the vigorous call for democratic change across the Middle East and North Africa in 2011, United Nations action in the field of support to democratic transitions has assumed a renewed sense of urgency. Each country must be in charge of its own destiny and lead the processes of change, but the United Nations must also be ready to make its expertise, best practices and lessons learned available. The Secretary-General has therefore made the promotion of democracy and human rights a key focus in his second term.

21. Coordination within the United Nations system and with national and regional actors is essential to the provision of appropriate and timely democracy support. The United Nations also counts on countries that have experienced democratic transitions in the recent past as partners in this endeavour; the Secretary-General considers the peer-to-peer exchange of proven practices a valuable form of assistance.

22. During the period under review, the Inter-Agency Working Group on Democracy of the Executive Committee on Peace and Security, which includes participants from the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Public Information, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, OHCHR, the Peacebuilding Support Office, the United Nations Democracy Fund, UNDP and UN-Women, organized in New York a series of round tables and seminars on the linkages between democracy and peace and security, human rights, and gender, respectively. Discussions have resulted in policy and operational recommendations, which have been shared in the form of reports and introduced into the internal policy process.

23. While opening the round table on "Democracy and gender equality" in May 2011, together with the UNDP Administrator, the Executive Director of UN-Women and the Secretary-General of the International Institute of Democracy and Electoral Assistance, the Secretary-General emphasized four key elements: (a) gender inequality in decision-making remains a great impediment to democracy; (b) while women's political participation improves democracy, the reverse is also true: democracy is an incubator for gender equality; (c) gender equality must be treated as an explicit goal of democracy-building, not as an "add on"; and (d) the Secretary-General recommitted the United Nations to a stronger gender perspective across its constellation of entities and activities related to democracy-building.

24. A key challenge for the United Nations remains how to address political crises and prevent their escalation, wherever they may occur. In that regard, the Secretariat has reviewed past United Nations action and developed guidance to ensure appropriate collective responses to issues arising from unconstitutional changes in power. It has also strengthened its capacity to use the Secretary-General's good offices to resolve and/or mitigate the consequences of such crises.

25. United Nations assistance to new or restored democracies is wide in scope and multifaceted and includes strengthening democratic governance and the rule of law; the protection and promotion of human rights; support to constitution-making processes; electoral assistance; enabling civic engagement; and empowering women. The following paragraphs provide some examples of how various departments, funds and programmes have been working in these fields during the period under review.

Strengthening democratic governance institutions and the rule of law

26. Poor governance is often a source and a direct consequence of conflict. Thus, the Organization's commitment to the promotion of good governance is reflected in the mandates of many of its peacekeeping and peacemaking missions. Moreover, addressing weak governance or redressing governance failures is now accepted as a central plank of conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding.

27. In this context, references to good governance are included in the mandates of many special political missions and peacebuilding offices led by the Department of Political Affairs as well as missions led by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. For example, the United Nations Office in Burundi, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau are tasked with the strengthening of democratic institutions and processes and the promotion of good governance. Moreover, processes to encourage inclusive national dialogue and reconciliation are included in the mission mandates of, for example, the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste.

28. Thus, helping to build and/or reform governance institutions is a key element of United Nations assistance to new or restored democracies. In order to enable greater public participation in decision-making processes and foster judicial, legislative and administrative reforms, various United Nations entities provide support for the improvement of the transparency and accountability of Governments.

29. The Division for Public Administration and Development Management of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has contributed to the promotion and consolidation of new or restored democracies through its work aimed at strengthening and/or rebuilding public administration systems, institutions, processes, leadership and human resources in post-conflict situations. In particular, the Secretariat has shared knowledge through research and publications that identify good practices; provided advisory services to countries emerging from conflict; and organized forums, expert group meetings and workshops to raise awareness and build capacity. Advisory services have been provided to a number of Member States, including the Comoros, Liberia, Rwanda, Timor-Leste and Uganda. The Secretariat has also organized a number of expert group meetings in Austria, Cameroon, Ghana and Spain to enhance common understanding of how to rebuild public administration after conflict and to refine related theories and concepts.

30. The Division for Public Administration and Development Management published the *World Public Sector Report 2010: Reconstructing Public Administration after Conflict — Challenges, Practices and Lessons Learned* and is developing a guidance toolkit on reconstructing public administration after conflict.

31. UNDP works on enhancing the accountability and transparency of democratic institutions by strengthening anti-corruption mechanisms based on human rights principles. For example, to tackle deficits in accountability and responsiveness in Mongolia, the Ministry of Health and UNDP streamlined and simplified procedures within the Ministry and improved access to information and communication.

32. Furthermore, UNDP has supported the work of one third of the world's parliaments, which play a critical role in democratic societies through oversight of the executive and as direct representatives of the people. In Papua New Guinea, for example, UNDP efforts contributed to increasing women's representation in parliament. In partnership with IPU and the Arab NGO Network for Development, UNDP has also supported the launch of a new working group on strengthening parliamentary-civil society collaboration for monitoring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals in Arab countries.

33. UNDP also helps new or restored democracies by facilitating the establishment of responsive and effective justice systems for all, including informal systems. As a result, several countries in Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe were assisted in embarking on initiatives that generated innovative approaches, including dedicated legal aid legislation and assistance, baseline justice needs assessments and affordable and effective justice delivery systems, such as alternative dispute resolution and hybrid customary/State adjudication forums. In Ethiopia, UNDP has supported projects that strengthen women's inheritance and property rights.

34. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) has identified human and institutional capacity-building initiatives as key tools for building and strengthening State institutions. To address some of the factors that have sparked the calls for democratic change in the Arab region, inter alia, social exclusion, rising poverty, inefficiency in public service delivery, corruption and human rights violations, ESCWA has initiated a series of activities to address civic participation and democracy in its Member States. During the period under review, initiatives included a regional civil society forum in Cairo in April 2011, a research project on democratic transitions and prospects for the future in the Arab region and several expert group meetings. All of these initiatives will be used as the basis for an interregional high-level meeting on transition to democracy to be held in January 2012.

Supporting democracy through the promotion of human rights

35. The values of freedom and respect for human rights are essential elements of democracy. In turn, democracy provides the natural environment for the protection and effective realization of human rights. These values are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and further developed in the International Covenants on Human Rights.

36. OHCHR provides input to global and regional actions for promoting democracy and human rights in cooperation with United Nations agencies and regional organizations, as well as legal and substantive advisory assistance. In addition to assisting national actors and institutions involved in the administration of justice, current efforts are also focused on enhancing the capacity of parliaments to promote and protect human rights. During the reporting period, the Office organized three subregional seminars for parliamentarians, in Central America and Central and West Africa, respectively.

Supporting constitution-making processes

37. Constitution-making is a broad concept that is central to democratic transitions, peacebuilding and State-building. It ranges from drafting a new constitution to reforming an existing one. Both processes are critical for the success of constitution-making, which presents a great opportunity to create a common vision of the future of a State, the results of which can have a profound and lasting impact on democracy, peace and stability. In particular, in post-conflict situations, the inclusion of commitments in peace agreements to address ethnic, regional, ideological or political tensions in a constitutional framework can be a vital element in consolidating peace. Similarly, provisions to reform national justice systems can provide an important platform for efforts to strengthen democracy and the rule of law.

38. The Department of Political Affairs Standby Team of Mediation Experts has helped bring expertise on such issues to the negotiating table and provided analysis and recommendations to the United Nations and regional organization mediation teams, as well as to conflict parties. The United Nations has been involved in a number of constitution-making processes in recent years, including in Afghanistan, Iraq and Timor-Leste. Constitutional assistance requires a combination of expertise that can be found in various departments and agencies, including the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office of Legal Affairs, UNDP and OHCHR. As part of its technical assistance to Member States in the area of constitution-making and constitutional reform, OHCHR focuses on processes, institutions and the substantive content of human rights provisions in constitutions.

Electoral assistance

39. The United Nations continues to provide a wide variety of election-related technical assistance to requesting Member States as part of a system-wide endeavour. The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs is the United Nations focal point for electoral assistance activities and has a mandate to ensure organizational coherence and political and technical consistency in all United Nations electoral activities, as reiterated in General Assembly resolution 64/155. A coordination mechanism has been established under the auspices of the focal point with relevant United Nations departments, agencies and programmes involved in electoral assistance and meets monthly to coordinate electoral activities and draft electoral policy.

40. Examples of recent electoral support provided by the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs and other entities include assistance to the 2010 referendum in the Sudan, where technical assistance was provided through the United Nations Integrated Referendum and Electoral Division of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan. The Electoral Assistance Division also supported the deployment of the Secretary-General's Panel on the Referenda in the Sudan, which monitored the atmosphere around the referendum in South Sudan and provided good offices. In Guinea, the Electoral Assistance Division provided political and technical assistance through the United Nations Office for West Africa and alongside diplomatic actors from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union to facilitate the country's transition from military to constitutional rule throughout 2009 and 2010. When Tunisia requested

United Nations electoral assistance during its transitional phase, a project was set up very rapidly.

41. In 2010, UNDP provided electoral assistance to 35 countries, with a focus on longer-term electoral cycle initiatives that include elections. The emphasis of UNDP support is increasingly targeted at the professionalization of electoral management bodies. While post-conflict and crisis contexts pose particular challenges, the cycle approach is beginning to pay dividends, for example, in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste, as electoral management bodies manage successive electoral cycles with diminishing international assistance.

42. Peacekeeping missions deployed by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations frequently include electoral components established in close coordination with UNDP and the Electoral Assistance Division, which also provide ongoing guidance to the work of such components. During the reporting period, United Nations missions in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Liberia, South Sudan and Timor-Leste supported electoral processes and longer-term democracy consolidation. In Côte d'Ivoire, during the post-election crisis in 2011, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) played a critical role in restoring constitutional order by ensuring that the will of the people was adhered to and the elected president was able to assume power. In this regard, the UNOCI certification mandate, which had been put in place by the Ivorian parties, proved to be a critical tool in guaranteeing the credibility of the elections. In coordination with ECOWAS and the African Union, the mission continues to promote an inclusive political process and to provide support to the creation of a political environment that is conducive to free and fair elections.

Enhancing civic engagement in democratic processes

43. A functioning democracy requires a free, active, vibrant and responsible civil society. To this end, civil society organizations, including non-governmental organizations, democratic reform groups, human rights groups, women's groups, youth groups, social movements, trade unions, minority representatives, professional societies, community groups and watchdog associations, are indispensable.

44. The United Nations Democracy Fund supports over 400 civil society projects in more than 150 Member States. These projects strengthen the voice of civil society, promote human rights and encourage the participation of all groups in democratic processes. The large majority of the Fund's projects go to local non-governmental organizations in new or restored democracies and focus on the strengthening of democratic dialogue, civil society empowerment, civic education, freedom of the press and the strengthening of the rule of law.

45. In its five rounds of funding thus far, the Fund has received over $120 million and has developed partnerships with 39 donor countries. In the fourth round, out of a selection list of 64 projects, 43 will be implemented in States that participate in the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies.

46. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) advocates for universal social protection policies which underpin economic opportunity, reduce income inequality and contribute to greater social cohesion

through inclusion. Ultimately, these policies strengthen institutions and the relationship between Government and its citizens.

Supporting women's empowerment

47. Empowering women and promoting women's rights are an integral part of United Nations democracy assistance. This includes explicitly addressing gender discrimination that contributes to women's exclusion and the marginalization of their concerns.

48. Through UN-Women and other entities, the United Nations supports new or restored democracies in improving gender responsiveness in the context of elections and promoting women's political participation. Three areas of support are particularly noteworthy: (a) building the capacity of women candidates and women elected officials; (b) fostering improved accountability for gender equality; and (c) promoting increased coverage of and attention to women in politics in the media.

49. During the period under review, UN-Women coordinated with the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support to produce an update of the Joint Guidelines on Enhancing the Role of Women in Post-Conflict Electoral Processes, and with the Department of Political Affairs and the inter-agency coordination mechanism for United Nations electoral assistance to ensure that electoral assistance consistently contained a substantive gender component. The programme "Making politics work with women" is intended to increase the number and effectiveness of women's representation in parliaments. It includes a global monitoring framework to track the number of women candidates in post-conflict elections and their success rate, support to election management bodies to enable them to become more gender-responsive, and assistance in the development of women's manifestos for advocacy with political parties.

50. In 2010 and 2011, UN-Women supported the transitional processes in Egypt, South Sudan, the Sudan and Tunisia and continued to support the constitutional reform in Nepal, which was initiated in 2007. The global Gender and Democratic Governance in Development programme of UN-Women further aims to foster inclusive governance by improving women's participation in the design and delivery of public services. It is currently being implemented in Morocco, Rwanda and Tajikistan.

51. The work of ESCAP towards gender equality and women's empowerment also contributes to the broadening of participation in local and national development by enhancing women's participation in State institutions. Democracy, participation and civic movements were extensively discussed at the Fifth Asia-Pacific Urban Forum, which addressed, for example, the role of new media based on information and communications technology in mobilizing civic movements to instigate change.

52. Throughout the reporting period, the Department of Public Information has published articles on democracy-related subjects, mounted exhibitions at United Nations Headquarters and produced features on United Nations Television. United Nations Radio has regularly reported on the Organization's efforts to promote and consolidate democratic governance in a variety of Member States, as well as on United Nations assistance to democratic transitions in countries in the Middle East and North Africa.

IV. The role of regional, intergovernmental and other organizations in the promotion and consolidation of democracy

53. In its resolution 64/12, the General Assembly encouraged Governments to strengthen national programmes devoted to the promotion and consolidation of democracy, including through increased bilateral, regional and international cooperation, taking into account innovative approaches and best practices.

54. In its resolution 62/7, the General Assembly encouraged regional and other intergovernmental organizations to share their experiences in the field of democracy promotion with each other and with the United Nations system, where appropriate. The United Nations attributes great importance to its partnerships with regional and intergovernmental organizations, including in the critical field of democracy promotion.

55. The reporting period was characterized by a broadening and deepening of the cooperation between the United Nations and regional and intergovernmental organizations. In particular, they strove to work in complementarity and to emphasize synergies in promoting, consolidating and strengthening democracy and democratic practices at the local, national, and regional levels to avoid duplication and ensure the efficient use of scarce resources. With their comprehensive normative frameworks and accumulated best practices, various regional and intergovernmental organizations provide valuable support to Governments and civil society in their respective regions. The organizations also assist in building the capacities of State institutions, including parliaments and electoral bodies. By building partnerships with diverse elements of civil society, the organizations seek to deepen democracy and the commitment to democratic values in emerging democracies.

56. The United Nations aims to increasingly support the exchange of best practices with and between regional organizations, in the field of democracy. The Secretariat continues to enhance its cooperation with regional organizations such as the African Union, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, European Union, North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) through annual experience-sharing on preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution approaches, or the so-called desk-to-desk discussions. Many of the discussions are linked to challenges related to democratic governance and how such challenges can be addressed.

57. In direct follow-up to the Secretary-General's retreat with heads of regional organizations in January 2010, the Department of Political Affairs co-hosted a regional workshop on "Preventive and quiet diplomacy, dialogue facilitation and mediation: best practices from regional organizations" with OSCE in December 2010.

58. In the light of developments in the Arab world, in June 2011 the United Nations and OSCE held thematic discussions on lessons learned and successful programmes from the OSCE area of responsibility of the past 15 to 20 years that might be of relevance to the Middle East and North Africa.

Intergovernmental democracy movements and organizations with a global reach

59. Two principal global democracy movements, the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies and the Community of Democracies, have established themselves within the international community. Both are global platforms for the exchange of experiences and consultations on democracy issues.

60. To date, a total of six International Conferences of New or Restored Democracies have been held: in Manila (1988); Managua (1994); Bucharest (1997); Cotonou (2000); Ulaanbaatar (2003); and the latest in Doha (2006).

61. The Community of Democracies held its sixth Ministerial Conference in Vilnius on 1 July 2011 under the theme "Empowered, energized, engaged". Civil society and non-governmental leaders from around the world also participated in the ministerial sessions. The Vilnius Declaration, which resulted from the Conference, adopted a set of commitments aimed at strengthening democratic development worldwide. Following the meeting, the chairmanship of the Community of Democracies passed from Lithuania to Mongolia.

62. There are a number of other democracy-related organizations that conduct work globally, including the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance and IPU.

63. With a specific mandate on democracy-building, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance is committed to supporting sustainable democratic change by providing comparative knowledge, assisting in democratic reform and influencing policies and politics. In partnership with the United Nations, regional organizations, election management bodies, think tanks and civil society organizations, the Institute focuses on four key impact areas: electoral processes; political parties, participation and representation; constitution-building processes; and democracy and development. Gender is mainstreamed throughout the Institute's programmes and a strong focus has been developed on South-South cooperation in democracy-building.

64. In 2010, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance expanded its Latin America programme to the Caribbean and, in response to the Arab Spring, established a new regional programme in Western Asia and North Africa.

65. The majority of IPU activities designed to build the capacity of parliaments to perform their role more efficiently focus on developing countries, countries undergoing transitions to democracy and those emerging from conflict. IPU has provided support to numerous national parliaments through advisory services, capacity-building seminars, workshops and training programmes, as well as through organizing focused study visits on various topics related to the functioning of parliament. In 2010 and 2011, IPU assisted a number of countries, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Maldives, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, the Sudan and Viet Nam. In cooperation with UNDP, IPU also supported parliaments in Afghanistan, Cambodia and the Central African Republic.

Regional and other intergovernmental organizations

66. A number of regional and intergovernmental organizations have established and continue to undertake new democracy support initiatives.

67. The Organization of American States (OAS) promotes and strengthens democracy on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations and the Inter-American Democratic Charter, which celebrates its tenth anniversary in 2011. The latter provides member States with a framework to guide their collective action when democracy faces challenges, recognizing that democracy goes beyond the holding of free and fair elections to include, inter alia, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, a pluralistic political party system, the separation of powers, and transparency. To commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, the Government of Peru organized dialogues on the preservation and promotion of democracy in the Americas, hosted by the President of Peru and with the participation of the Secretary General of OAS.

68. Through its good offices, OAS assists countries in situations where the legitimate exercise of power is called into question. Such was the case of Honduras, whose participation in OAS was suspended after the coup d'état in 2009 and reinstated only in 2011. OAS also works in the area of institutional strengthening, particularly to enhance the effectiveness of public management and, consequently, governance, and strengthening electoral institutions, most notably in 2011 in Haiti.

69. OAS has continued to strengthen democratic processes in the region through its electoral observation missions, which were conducted in numerous countries throughout the region.

70. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) adopted the SAARC Charter of Democracy in February 2011 to further encourage the pursuit of democratic values in the region. In particular, Member States realized the challenges that they faced in ensuring effective, efficient, transparent and accountable Governments and thus emphasized the need for regional cooperation to strengthen good governance by sharing best practices and establishing inter-institutional linkages. Since 1992, the SAARC Parliamentary Ministerial-level Conference has facilitated people-to-people contact and promoted mutual understanding, trust and friendship. It has facilitated the exchange of experiences between parliamentarians, as has the SAARC Speakers Forum.

71. The Council of Europe's core mandate remains geographically focused on Europe. However, as many of the core issues under its mandate are being influenced by developments outside the European continent, the development of a coherent policy towards its immediate neighbourhood has become a priority for the Council. The Council's goal in this regard is to promote dialogue and cooperation with countries and regions that request its assistance, on the basis of the common values of respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law, through advice, election observation, a partnership for democracy between the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council and national parliaments, participation in relevant Council structures, and accession to the Council's Conventions. The Forum for the Future of Democracy, the Strasbourg International Forum for Democracy and cooperation programmes in the field of electoral assistance are additional tools to exchange best practices.

72. At the European Union, democracy assistance is a core element of external relations. The Treaty of Lisbon states that the European Union's action on the international scene shall be guided by the principles which have inspired its own creation and which it seeks to advance in the wider world: democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and respect for human dignity. The European Union reaffirms that there is no development without democracy and no sustainable democracy without development. It recognizes that the Arab Spring has brought into sharp focus the reality that defending democracy is about not only beliefs and values but also interests and long-term stability that enables investment.

73. In 2010 and 2011, following the adoption in 2009 of the Council of the European Union's conclusions on democracy support in the European Union's external relations, which established a list of pilot countries (Benin, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Central African Republic, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Maldives, Mongolia, the Philippines, the Republic of Moldova and the Solomon Islands), the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights implemented more than 50 pro-democracy projects. These range from initiatives encouraging the political participation of groups underrepresented in political participation and implementation of democracy reforms in general and sector reforms in particular to promoting increased transparency and accountability during elections and encouraging more informed public policy debates and freedom of expression.

74. OSCE implements measures in support of new or restored democracies in the OSCE area through various institutions and mechanisms. Its participating States are committed to the vision of a free, democratic, common and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community, rooted in agreed principles, shared commitments and common goals.

75. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the Representative on Freedom of the Media of OSCE assist Governments in meeting their democracy and human rights commitments, including freedom of expression, and work closely with the OSCE field missions and a large number of partners: Governments, international organizations and civil society. On the ground, its 17 field operations in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia contribute to democratic development in the regions in which they are deployed.

76. The International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF) promotes the consolidation of democracy within its 75 member States in accordance with the Bamako Declaration of 2000 on democracy, the Saint Boniface Declaration of 2006 on conflict prevention and human security and the Paris Declaration of 2008 on justice. OIF activities include, inter alia, capacity-building for public institutions, including the judiciary; training of civil servants; improving access to information; and electoral assistance in Albania, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Haiti, Madagascar, the Niger and Tunisia.

V. Observations and recommendations

77. In document A/64/372, the Secretary-General made a number of recommendations relating to United Nations cooperation with both

intergovernmental democracy movements as well as regional and other intergovernmental organizations working in the field of democracy promotion. In the light of developments since the beginning of 2011 in particular and the continuing evaluation of United Nations efforts to provide appropriate and sustainable democracy assistance, the following observations and recommendations are made.

Recommendation 1
Enhance the impact and reach of the International Day of Democracy

78. Since the inception of the International Day of Democracy in 2008, the response of Member States, intergovernmental and regional organizations and the United Nations system to its celebration has been noteworthy. However, the international community needs to be more ambitious. More Member States should regard the day as an opportunity to encourage citizen engagement and to highlight the benefits and opportunities of living in free, democratic societies.

79. Particular attention should be paid to youth: in 2011, in Egypt, Tunisia and elsewhere, many young people have been at the forefront of a demand for democratic change. However, in more established democracies and even in countries where hard-won democratic transitions took place barely a generation or two ago, youth disenchantment and low participation are often prevalent. The world needs to foster a new generation of leaders that, from Government and civil society, will work to actively sustain and build on democratic gains. The International Day of Democracy offers an opportunity to reach out to the next generation of leaders.

80. The Secretary-General calls upon all Member States to continue to mark this important day and to actively promote its commemoration through an encouragement of the participation of citizens, particularly youth. The Organization stands ready to be a partner in the efforts of Member States.

Recommendation 2
Strengthen the democracy assistance of the United Nations

81. Demand for United Nations assistance on democracy-related issues such as capacity- and institution-building, elections and the rule of law has grown exponentially since the beginning of 2011. The Secretary-General has made the promotion of democracy and human rights a key focus of his second term and reaffirms both his and the Organization's commitment to providing sustainable democracy assistance that builds national capacities in a timely, effective and efficient manner.

82. Building on the close cooperation of the United Nations with regional and intergovernmental organizations, the Secretary-General intends to focus the work of the Organization with regard to democracy assistance on three key areas: (a) facilitating the exchange of practices and lessons learned between Member States and other actors at the national, regional and international levels; (b) strengthening the Organization's capacity to act as a resource for technical assistance and advice for Member States; and (c) improving and refining the actions of the United Nations as implementer to assist Member States in transition, including by promoting holistic approaches and emphasizing greater intra- and inter-institutional cooperation and rationalization of activities.

83. Developments in the Middle East and North Africa are a reminder that democratic transitions require both a long-term commitment and a holistic approach, not only domestically but also with regard to international assistance. Effective and sustainable democracy-building constitutes an essential element of long-term conflict prevention and post-conflict consolidation. It is the Secretary-General's resolve to enhance coordination of the existing resources of the United Nations across the system and to connect United Nations crisis response more directly and coherently with longer-term support needs in watershed moments of political change. To this end, for example, the Secretary-General has convened regular meetings with heads of regional organizations to coordinate the international response to the situation in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and to discuss how to assist the country comprehensively in the aftermath of conflict.

84. As noted in document A/64/372, the Secretary-General has taken steps to intensify internal discussion within the United Nations on how it can bring more coherence and consistency to the democracy assistance that it delivers so as to maximize its effectiveness. The establishment of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Democracy of the Executive Committee on Peace and Security has already resulted in greater efforts at policy coordination. On the International Day of Democracy in 2010, several United Nations entities launched a web portal on democracy, which serves as a gateway to information on the wide range of United Nations system efforts to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies. The portal is a useful tool for fostering coherence and promoting a shared understanding of the principles and areas of United Nations democracy assistance.

Recommendation 3
Review the role of and synergies between the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies and the Community of Democracies

85. As stated in the Secretary-General's report of 2009 (A/64/372), an issue of interest for the United Nations is enhancing the degree of complementarity and coordination between the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies and the Community of Democracies.

86. In this watershed moment of democratic change, peer assistance has become more relevant than ever before. Member States who have undergone democratic transitions in the recent past are an invaluable resource. Through their membership and their activities, both the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies and the Community of Democracies possess a wealth of knowledge and experience that could assist Member States in transition. The Doha Declaration of the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, adopted in November 2006, encouraged consultation and increased cooperation to facilitate technical cooperation, including the exchange of experiences on issues of common interest. For its part, the Community of Democracies supported the 2005 Santiago Ministerial Commitment, entitled "Cooperating for democracy".

87. Both movements should continue to actively seek and build synergies in their work. It appears of particular relevance that both movements consider enhancing peer support to countries undergoing democratic transition in complementarity with other efforts. This could also entail creating mechanisms for coordination and even strategic partnership between the two movements, where feasible. The United Nations stands ready to provide assistance in this regard if requested by both movements.